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NEWS
FROM YOUR MUSEUM
THE ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

Know your Museum better

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Rocks for your Furnace

Here's a seasonable conundrum. What rock is made of compressed, partially-decayed plants and is found in Canadian cellars in winter and costs about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a cent per pound? Look in your coal bin for the answer. A single pound of good coal, Dr. E.S. Moore of the Royal Ontario Museum, informed us, contains enough energy, if all were used, to raise the temperature of about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a ton of water $1^{o}F$. This great energy comes from partially decayed vegetation buried in great swamps some of which existed hundreds of millions of years ago. It was buried under sediments and compressed into coal. The more pressure the harder the coal, as a rule, so "hard coal" or anthracite forms where the rocks have been greatly squeezed in mountains. Gases escape from the vegetation and are imprisoned in the coal. Some are violently explosive and, when accidentally ignited during mining, cause the disastrous explosions and fires about which we have lately read. Coal, when distilled, yields motor fuels and in England and Germany there are large plants in which hydrogen is united with coal at high temperature and under heavy pressure so most of the coal is changed to a liquid. Hundreds of thousands of tons of motor fuel are thus made and this is a big factor in Germany's gasoline supply.

A NEW INDUSTRY

The stress of war develops new industries. Optical glass is a good example. It has just been made in Canada for the first time. Samples have arrived at the Royal Ontario Museum from Research Enterprises Limited, through its President, Col. W.E. Phillips. Canada is no longer dependent on other countries for its optical glass so essential in all manner of scientific, engineering and military instruments.

The exhibit shows two large lumps of glass as it comes from the cooled melting pot. These samples are irregular in shape and dazzlingly beautiful to behold. Photographs and other glass specimens depict stages in the cutting, grinding and polishing of prisms and lenses. One can see in this new industry not only production for the immediate needs of war but an industry to supply a hundred civilian demands when peace comes.

SKATING ON A MINERAL

There is one common mineral not to be found in the galleries of the Royal Ontario Museum. What is it? Ice! Water unlike most members of the mineral kingdom, crystalizes at a very low point, freezing we call it. Perhaps you didn't know you had been skating on a mineral.

MUSEUM ATTENDANCE UP!

In the year 1941, 273,859 persons visited the Royal Ontario Museum. This marks the third largest attendance in its history. Soldiers, sailors and airmen in uniform, women of the various services, school children and Mr. and Mrs. John Citizen from all over the province have found constructive diversion in its many galleries.

Naturalists Plan Post-war Work

The Federation of Ontario Naturalists will hold their annual meeting on February 28th in the Royal Ontario Museum. One important matter scheduled for discussion is a post-war conservation scheme. This plan being developed in conjunction with other organizations will provide an answer to two vital questions. How can we conserve the natural resources of Ontario--prevent our streams and wells from drying up, check the erosion of our soil and use unproductive fields for growing crops of trees? Equally important is the second question. How can we provide constructive work for our soldiers when peace comes? There are great possibilities here but success will depend upon our present planning and imaginative foresight.

The public is cordially invited to attend the Federation's meeting. They will find on the programme items that will appeal to either the scientific or the aesthetic mind. The future of our natural resources will necessitate both of these viewpoints. Although the scientific student may provide us with information, this will be of no avail unless the sympathetic layman insists that the ideas be translated into action. Trees, start 'em growing; waters, keep 'em flowing; men, put 'em working!

A REFUGEE CHIMPANZEE

One of the chimpanzees sent to Canada from the London Zoo recently died in Toronto. Mr. K. Nielsen of the Royal Ontario Museum has sculptured a replica over which the animal's tanned skin is skillfully cemented and stitched. It now forms one of the new exhibits in the Museum's gallery of zoology.

The Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto is open week days except Monday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
On Sundays from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.